

High Blood Pressure

Blood pressure is the force of blood against the walls of arteries. It is measured by two numbers: systolic and diastolic pressure. **Systolic pressure** (the higher number) is the pressure on your artery walls as your heart beats. **Diastolic pressure** (the lower number) is the pressure on your artery walls when your heart relaxes between beats. The numbers are shown as systolic pressure over diastolic pressure and are measured in millimeters of mercury (mmHg).

High blood pressure (or hypertension) is dangerous because it makes the heart work too hard and contributes to atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries). It is often called the “silent killer” because there are often no symptoms. High blood pressure is the leading cause of heart attack, stroke, kidney failure and congestive heart failure.

Blood Pressure Level (mmHg)			
Category	Systolic		Diastolic
Normal	< 120	and	< 80
Pre-hypertension	120-139	or	80-89
High Blood Pressure			
Stage 1 Hypertension	140–159	or	90–99
Stage 2 Hypertension	≥ 160	or	≥ 100

Legend
< means LESS THAN
≥ means GREATER THAN OR EQUAL TO

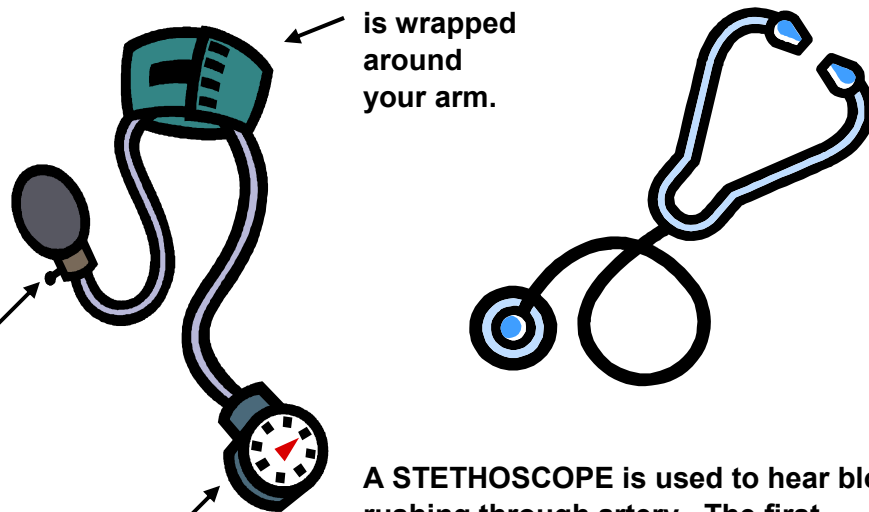
The **PUMP** inflates the cuff to stop the blood flow in your artery for a few seconds.

The **VALVE** lets some air out of the cuff to allow blood to flow again.

The **DIAL** records blood pressure reading.

The **CUFF** is wrapped around your arm.

A **STETHOSCOPE** is used to hear blood rushing through artery. The first “thumping” sound is the systolic blood pressure. The diastolic blood pressure is when the “thumping” sound is no longer heard.





Tips for Lowering Your High Blood Pressure

- ❖ **Eat Healthy** — Eat more fruits and vegetables and lower your intake of saturated fat, total fat and cholesterol.
- ❖ **Reduce Salt and Sodium Intake** — Doctors recommend consuming no more than 1,500 mg of sodium (salt) each day to lower high blood pressure.
- ❖ **Physical Activity** — According to the U.S. Surgeon General, doing some kind of moderate physical activity (brisk walking, yard work, house work, climbing stairs) for a total of 30 minutes a day, most days of the week, will help reduce your blood pressure, as well as your weight, cholesterol and risk of heart disease.
- ❖ **Maintain a Healthy Weight** — Being overweight or obese increases your chance of having high blood pressure. Eating healthy and exercising more can help you lose weight.
- ❖ **Limit Alcohol Intake**—Drinking alcohol can raise blood pressure, as well as harm the liver, brain and heart. If you do drink, do so moderately: one drink a day for women, two drinks a day for men.
- ❖ **Quit Smoking** — Smoking can lead to the build-up of plaque that clogs the blood vessels that supply the heart with blood. Smoking also constricts blood vessels and damages the linings of blood vessels.



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